Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Tangible Structure, Facility or Educational Program

Project Number: 0607-07 <u>Date: 10 September 07</u>

Title: 2008 Youth Developmental "Hooked on Fishing" Adventure (Year 1)

The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws and regulations related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, administering the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament program, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

A. Project Purpose

1. Does the project meet statutory guidelines for funding?

This project will provide access to a meaningful fishing experience for children, as well as some information on boating safety. The children will enjoy a chartered fishing trip, receive a fishing rod and reel, and be provided with awards, snacks and lunch.

2. Does the project fulfill a real need and/or provide a substantial benefit to the saltwater recreational fishery?

The project will benefit the saltwater recreational fishery as these young anglers are introduced to the sport. Programs that involve children in fishing activities ultimately benefit the recreational fishery and the recreational fishing industry.

3. Does the project provide its main, or substantial, benefits to the saltwater recreational angler?

Yes, these young anglers will be exposed to a saltwater recreational fishing experience, under the guidance of licensed, experienced captains.

B. Project Analysis

1. What are the project's strengths?

Because the number of children for each fishing trip is relatively low, the opportunity for a meaningful

experience is high. The captains and volunteers will be able to interact with each participant directly. In addition to the benefits to the children, the charter captains and volunteers will also benefit by the opportunity to make a positive contribution to young, potential future anglers.

2. What are the project's weaknesses?

The project is not clear how a child qualifies, other than belonging to a scout troop in one of the four areas. In partnering with the scout system, this project could provide a significant educational experience in the weeks before the charter boat field trip. Likewise, the organized scout troop setting would be an ideal venue for the children to provide some "after the trip" feedback and additional educational experience—perhaps in the form of a group essay. Such feedback would provide the RFAB with helpful information and could help to establish guidelines with regards to funding and evaluating similar projects in the future.

C. Project Budget

- Is the budget realistic and reasonable for 1) the size and type of project proposed;
 the number of people likely to benefit; and, 3) the area benefiting from the project considering the area's number of saltwater fishermen and license sales?
- 1) The RFAB funding request (\$6,780) works out to approximately \$80 per child for a one-day event. Considering this is a chartered fishing trip plus each child is scheduled to receive a fishing rod and reel, other awards plus snacks and lunch, the cost seems reasonable.
- 2) The number of children benefiting is relatively low compared to similar projects of like structure and goals.
- 3) The four areas listed by the project manager are all significant contributors to the saltwater license fund through the purchase of saltwater fishing licenses.
 - 2. What is the local commitment to the project (cost sharing, future management and maintenance, in-kind commitments of personnel, etc.)?

Information provided by the one-page project summary was extremely sparse regarding cost sharing/local commitment except the \$4,500 cost of the charter boat trips. However, the RFAB has a history of supporting and funding children's fishing programs.

D. Provide an overall evaluation of the project, including a numerical ranking of the project on the "SCORE" scale provided.

This project has the potential to provide a very high quality fishing experience for potential future saltwater anglers. However, comparing costs and the number of children involved in similar projects funded by the RFAB, earlier projects have offered a greater educational potential and involved a greater number of children at a lower cost per child. In choosing to partner with local scout troops, the Virginia Charter Boat Association has an excellent opportunity to greatly enhance their project's benefits—either by providing some contact within the scout club setting before the field outing or encouraging a scout group exercise following the outing.